

# STATE OF NEBRASKA

## DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

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## NEWS RELEASE

NR-0727

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

October 16, 2007

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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### **Medicare Announces 2008 Part D and Medicare Advantage Plans**

In preparation for this fall's open enrollment period, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services recently released information on the 2008 Medicare prescription drug plans and Medicare Advantage plan options in Nebraska.

Medicare beneficiaries across the state will have a total of 52 prescription drug plans to choose from for the upcoming year. This compares to 53 drug plans in 2007. Monthly premiums for the 2008 drug plans range from \$13.90 to \$99.00.

"As Medicare Part D prepares to enter its third year, we continue to see plan options change, whether it is monthly premiums, lists of covered drugs, or levels of coverage," said Jina Ragland, Director of the Nebraska Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP).

While 16 plans offer partial to full coverage for generic drugs during the coverage gap, for the first time since the inception of Part D, no plan is available that covers both generic and brand name drugs for beneficiaries in the coverage gap.

In 2008, once a beneficiary's drug costs reach \$2,510, the beneficiary will enter a coverage gap, sometimes referred to as a "doughnut hole." This annual limit is based on the total cost of each medication, not just the amount the beneficiary pays.

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Once affected beneficiaries enter the coverage gap, they are required to pay full price for their drugs until they have paid a total of \$4,050 out-of-pocket for the year, at which point their plan will pay 95 percent of their covered drug costs for the rest of the calendar year.

In addition to Nebraska's 52 available stand-alone prescription drug plans, a total of 138 Medicare Advantage plans are being offered in 2008. This compares to 39 plans in 2007. Monthly premiums for next year's Medicare Advantage plans range from \$0 to \$201.00. Prescription drug coverage is offered with 71 of these plans.

"Help is available for Nebraska's Medicare beneficiaries who need assistance comparing their options for 2008," said Ragland. "Trained SHIIP counselors can provide free, unbiased assistance to people with Medicare across the state."

Medicare's open enrollment period begins November 15 and runs through December 31. For more information, contact SHIIP at 1-800-234-7119. To view and compare the 2008 plan options, visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) on the web.

*The Nebraska Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) is part of a national network, funded by a grant from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, that offers unbiased counseling and educational services designed to help senior citizens and those with disabilities make informed decisions on topics related to health insurance. With over 200 volunteers across the state, the Nebraska SHIIP is coordinated within the Nebraska Department of Insurance.*